

CHAPTER III

PARODY AND VARIATION IN MONTEVERDI'S VESPERS

From late 1606 through the summer of 1610 Monteverdi was immersed in a series of compositional projects that were to prove of immense importance to the history of Western music. Under great pressure and in the midst of terrible personal crises,¹ he completed four major works, all of them employing stylistic and technical features with which he had had virtually no previous experience. Two of these projects were operatic: *L'Orfeo*, which was first performed in late February 1607, and *Arianna*, premiered on May 28, 1608.² The other two consisted of sacred music, published as the Mass and Vespers of the Blessed Virgin, dated the calends of September, 1610.³ Of these latter two works we have no certain information concerning performances in Mantua.⁴

In all four of these extraordinarily large efforts Monteverdi was faced with completely new compositional problems. Aside from the recently invented dramatic recitative, *L'Orfeo* raised unprecedented questions of structural organization. Before *L'Orfeo*, Monteverdi's published repertoire had consisted exclusively of short madrigals and youthful *Sacrae Cantionculae*, none of which demanded structural planning on a large scale.⁵ But the new music drama did require such organization, and among the many remarkable aspects of *L'Orfeo* is a multiplicity of ingenious solutions to the formal problems of both single numbers and entire acts. In individual pieces Monteverdi's structures are for the most part based upon strophic variations. On larger organizational levels we find symmetrical arrangements of *personae*, scenes, and musical settings.

Although Monteverdi's subsequent opera, *Arianna*, is lost except for the famous *Lamento*, it is probable that the organizational means were similar to *L'Orfeo*, especially in view of the haste in which the composer was forced to work.⁶

The *Missa In illo tempore* of 1610 presented Monteverdi with quite different problems pertaining to traditional imitative techniques and the style

of Netherlandish polyphony, another area in which he was inexperienced.⁷ But even if Monteverdi found the polyphonic style difficult, he could nevertheless rely upon a universal and long-established tradition for his models. In the Vespers, printed together with the Mass, the case was just the opposite, since there were no precedents for either the stylistic diversity of the collection as a whole or the construction and organization of *concertato* sacred compositions of such large dimensions.⁸

In his two operas of 1607 and 1608, Monteverdi had the advantage of a dramatic plot as well as elaborate staging and costuming to help capture his audience. But with the lengthy Vespers, the series of liturgical and interpolated texts bore no such benefits. What is more, the great diversity of musical styles in this collection and the expansion of most of the individual pieces well beyond conventional lengths could have threatened the artistic integrity and cohesion of the entire Vesper service.⁹ Indeed, finding a means for constructing and holding together such a huge body of divergent material was a compositional challenge of staggering proportions.

Monteverdi uses many different points of departure for the music of his Vespers,¹⁰ but the organizing force underlying nearly all of the fourteen pieces is the process of variation, expanded and deepened far beyond anything found in *L'Orfeo*. As in the opera, symmetrical arrangements of the various sections are evident in three of the larger works.¹¹ In addition, two of the pieces are parody compositions in which the parody process often borders closely on the techniques of variation.

Those portions of the Vespers involving parody, unlike the *Missa In illo tempore*, are wholly dependent on Monteverdi's own compositions. The opening respond, *Domine ad adiuvandum*, has long been recognized as an elaboration and expansion of the toccata introducing *L'Orfeo*. Less well known is that one of the two *Magnificats* is a parody of the other. In the respond, the *Orfeo* toccata is lengthened and enlarged by several means: its simple motives are expanded through additional repetition, a six-voice choir (SSATTB) chanting in measured *falsobordone* is superimposed on the orchestra,¹² triple-meter *ritornelli* are inserted between the verses of the text, and an *Alleluia* based on the *ritornelli* and combining voices and instruments is appended as a new conclusion. Another significant, though easily overlooked, alteration is the addition of a second treble part for *cornetto* and violin in the instrumental ensemble. This second part generates an imitative duet with the already existing first part and thereby brings the respond into correspondence with the numerous sections throughout the Vespers in which two voices or instruments in the same register are paired in imitation. These duets are one of the most consistent features of the Vespers and make an important contribution to the collection's musical cohesion. The augmentation of the texture in *Domine ad adiuvandum* by this second treble part suggests a purposeful attempt by Monteverdi to unify the respond with other pieces in the print.

General similarities have also been noted in the past between the two *Magnificats* in the Vespers, one *à 6* with organ accompaniment and the other *à 7* with six additional *obligato* instruments.¹³ Each of the two *Magnificats* is subdivided into twelve sections corresponding with the verses of the text and the Doxology. Of these twelve segments, ten have some form of identity between the two settings. It is not possible to determine with certainty which *Magnificat* is a parody of which, but the musical analysis that follows strongly suggests that the smaller six-voice setting served as the basis for the larger one with instruments.

The nature of the parallels between the two canticles differs from one section to the next. The treatment of the opening word, *Magnificat*, is very similar in both settings. The basses of both versions have identical pitches; only the rhythm differs slightly. The polyphonic texture of the *Magnificat à 6* increases in two-bar phrases: first a single voice, then four voices, and finally all six. But the texture of the seven-voice setting is built from groups of one, three, and seven parts with overlapping rather than separate phrases.

EXAMPLE 1a. *Magnificat à 6, Anima mea*

EXAMPLE 1b. *Magnificat à 7, Anima mea*

The continuation of the opening verse with *anima mea Dominum* likewise proceeds in parallel settings (see examples 1a and 1b). The *Magnificat* à 7 has a reduced vocal texture with one voice rather than two, so the passage is only half as long. There are also some important differences in the bass lines. Where the bass unfolds in a somewhat amorphous scalar form in the setting à 6 (example 1a), it is tightened into more discrete motivic units in the other *Magnificat*, causing alterations in the details of the harmony (example 1b).

A different kind of relationship obtains between the two settings of the *Et exultavit*. Both versions consist of a virtuoso tenor duet with a Magnificat-tone *cantus firmus* in the alto and organ continuo (see examples 2a and 2b). Even though the *Magnificat* à 6 is in triple meter and the *Magnificat* à 7 in duple time, the basses have nearly identical pitches through *in Deo*. But after that point the larger *Magnificat* deviates from the momentary D minor toward F major and an eventual conclusion on the tonic G minor, while the smaller *Magnificat* continues and ends in D minor with only a brief hint at F major shortly before the final cadence.

The tenor parts of the two settings diverge more gradually than the bass lines. The two tenors begin quite similarly, though the melisma of the *Magnificat* à 6 expands to cover a wider range. The sequential repetition beginning at the second *et exultavit* follows the same pattern in both pieces, but the conclusion of the phrase with *spiritus meus* is different. In the *Magnificat* à 7 the text is repeated and there is more complex rhythmic interaction between the voices. After the cadence the vocal parts diverge significantly, even though the harmony remains the same in both canticles. The large *Magnificat* treats the words *in Deo* with shorter melismatic patterns, which imitate one another at briefer time intervals. These melismatic figures no longer have much in common with those of the *Magnificat* à 6. As described above, the harmony changes in the midst of this passage, and *salutari meo* receives more extended and more complex melismatic treatment in the *Magnificat* à 7. Thus the similar openings of the two pieces gradually give way to greater and greater divergence until only the general character of both settings remains the same at the end.

A still different type of relationship emerges in the next section. Both *Magnificats* present the verse *Quia respexit* in plainchant in the tenor, but the *obbligato* instrumental forces of the *Magnificat* à 7 engender an obvious distinction between the two versions. Nevertheless, both are constructed on the same pattern, consisting of an introductory *ritornello* in triple meter followed by the plainchant verse in duple time and completed by the return of the *ritornello*, which accompanies the concluding words, *omnes generationes*. The organ *ritornello* of the *Magnificat* à 6 shares little with the instrumental *ritornello* of the other setting aside from its structural position, meter, and generally scalar bass; the two *ritornelli* even begin in different

First system of the musical score for 'Magnificat à 6, Et exultavit'. It features four vocal parts: Altus, Tenor, Quintus, and Bassus Generalis. The music is in 3/2 time with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: Altus: Et; Tenor: Et exulto - - - vit; Quintus: Et exulto - - - vit; Bassus Generalis: Et exulto - - - vit.

Second system of the musical score. The lyrics continue: Altus: e - - - xul - ta - - -; Tenor: et exul - ta - - -; Quintus: - - - vit et exul - ta - - -; Bassus Generalis: - - - vit et exul - ta - - -.

Third system of the musical score. The lyrics continue: Altus: - vit spi - ri - tus me - - - us; Tenor: - - - vit spi - ri - tus me - - - us in De - - -; Quintus: - - - vit spi - ri - tus me - - - us; Bassus Generalis: - - - vit spi - ri - tus me - - - us.

EXAMPLE 2a. *Magnificat à 6, Et exultavit* (cont. on next page)



in De - - - - -

- - - - - o in

in De - - - - -

- - - - -



15

- o sa - lu - ta - ri me - - -

De - o saluta-ri in Deo saluta-ri in Deo saluta - - -

- o in De-o solu-tari in Deo saluta - - -

- - - - -



20

- - - - - o.

- - - - - ri me - - - o.

- - - - - ri me - - - o.

- - - - -

EXAMPLE 2a continued.

The musical score is written for four voices: Altus, Tenor, Quintus, and Bassus Generalis. The music is in 7/8 time and features a complex, rhythmic texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The lyrics are Latin, and the score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the phrase 'Et exultavit'. The second system continues the phrase and includes the words 'spiritus meus'. The third system continues the phrase and includes the words 'in Deo salutatus'. The Altus part is mostly whole and half notes, while the other three parts have more active, melodic lines. The Bassus Generalis part provides a steady harmonic foundation with longer note values.

Altus
Tenor
Quintus
Bassus Generalis

Et e - - - xul -
Et exulta - - - vit et exulta - -
Et exul-ta - - - vit et exul-
- ta - - - vit spi - ri - tus me - - us
- vit spi - ri - tus me - - us spi - ri - tus me -
- us in De - - o sa - lu - ta -
- us in De - - -

EXAMPLE 2b. *Magnificat à 7, Et exultavit* (cont. on next page)

10

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system contains measures 10, 11, and 12. It features four staves: a vocal line in treble clef and three piano accompaniment staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The vocal line has lyrics: '- ri me - - - - - o, - - - - -'. The piano accompaniment includes a continuous eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simpler bass line in the left hand. The second system contains measures 13 and 14. The vocal line continues with lyrics: '- o in Deo saluta - - - - - ri me - - - - -'. The piano accompaniment continues with similar patterns, including some sixteenth-note runs in the right hand.

EXAMPLE 2b continued.

keys. During the verse, however, where the two settings have the same chant, there are both similarities and significant differences in the bass lines. At first the basses are identical, but the subsequent successive entrances of paired *pifare*, trombones, and flutes in the *Magnificat à 7*, which result in a sizable pause between the two lines of the verse, create displacements in the original harmony. Corresponding passages between the two settings are still similar, but these passages no longer occur in exactly the same place (see examples 3a and 3b).¹⁴

These two versions of the *Quia respexit* imply that the *Magnificat à 6* has served as the model for the *Magnificat à 7* rather than vice versa. It seems more likely that the instruments were added to form the larger *Magnificat* rather than subtracted to form the smaller one. This supposition is supported by the differences in the bass lines underlying the plainchant, since several of the changes are necessitated by the presence of the *obbligato* instruments.

The parallels between the two *Magnificats* in their first three verses yield to a reversal of styles and performing forces in the next two segments. In the *Magnificat à 6* the *Quia fecit* is set for six voices in *Dialogo*, i.e., in alternating groups of three voices. The two trios contrast in sonority, one comprising the three high voices with the plainchant in the topmost part, and the other the three low voices, likewise with the plainchant in the topmost part. The two trios alternate with each phrase of the text until the last, where they join together. Since the general stylistic character of the trios resembles late sixteenth-century polyphony, the setting has a decidedly conservative flavor despite the dialogue technique.

This conservative *Quia fecit* is followed by the *Et misericordia* in a modern duet style. Two virtuoso sopranos are concerted with the *Magnificat-tone cantus firmus* in the tenor in a setting similar to the *Et exultavit*.

Tenor

Bassus Generalis

Qui - a res - pe - - xit hu - mili - ta - tem an -

- cil - lae su - ae ec - ce e - nim ex hoc be - a - tam me di - cent

EXAMPLE 3a. *Magnificat à 6, Quia respexit*

Quintus

Pifara

Pifara

Bassus Generalis

Qui - a res-pe - - xit hu - mi - -

5

- li - ta - tem an - cil - lae su - ae

Trombone

Trombone

10

ec - ce e - - nim ex hoc bea - - tam me di - - - cent

Flauto

Flauto

15

EXAMPLE 3b. *Magnificat à 7, Quia respexit*

In the *Magnificat à 7* the styles of the two verses are inverted. Here the *Quia fecit* is the virtuoso duet, now set for two basses with the alto carrying the *cantus firmus*, and the *Et misericordia* is the polyphonic dialogue in six parts. The *Quia fecit* employs *obbligato* instruments in addition to the voices and resembles the *Et misericordia* of the *Magnificat à 6* only in general character and overall structural outline: both pieces begin imitatively, reach a cadence in a major key in declamatory, chordal style, continue with only one of the duet parts (the small *Magnificat* also has the *cantus firmus* at this point), and then restore the voice pairing to the end.

Not only are the types of settings reversed between the two *Magnificats*, but in the six-voice dialogues, the position of each trio is inverted as well. The high trio comes first in the *Magnificat à 6*, but the low trio precedes in the *Magnificat à 7*. A reversal of tonal structure is also in evidence, for the *Quia fecit* of the smaller *Magnificat* rotates the Aeolian mode between G and D as the trios alternate, while the *Et misericordia* of the larger *Magnificat* oscillates in the opposite direction between D and G. Though a vague resemblance may be seen when comparing one trio with its counter-

EXAMPLE 4a. *Magnificat à 6, Quia fecit*

EXAMPLE 4b. *Magnificat à 7, Et misericordia*

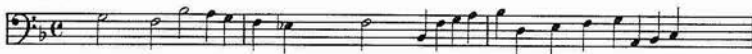
part in the other *Magnificat*, there is no close identity between the two (see examples 4a and 4b).

Despite occasional similarities in the individual voices and the bass lines, the *Quia fecit-Et misericordia* pairs are not as closely related to one another as some of the other verses already discussed. The concept and structure of these segments are parallel in reverse order, but the details differ considerably.

In the succeeding verses Monteverdi's imagination appears inexhaustible in the variety of means he finds for adapting the settings of one *Magnificat* to the other. The *Fecit potentiam* of the *Magnificat à 6* calls for two sopranos with the alto intoning the *cantus firmus*. At first sight this would appear to bear little relation to the other *Fecit potentiam*, which is for three string instruments and *cantus firmus*. Moreover, the latter rendering is in triple meter while the former is in duple time. As in the *Quia respexit* settings, the version with *obbligato* instruments is a more extended piece. But once again the bass lines reveal a relationship, with substantial portions of the *Magnificat à 7* parallel to passages of the *Magnificat à 6*. This is illustrated in example 5, which distributes the bass from the larger *Magnificat* below that of the smaller one.

Once it is observed that the lowest of the three instruments in the *Magnificat à 7* merely doubles the continuo part, it becomes evident that the two violins are an instrumental substitute for the two sopranos from the *Magnificat à 6*. The violin parts are entirely different from the vocal lines, but they serve the same function in relation to the plainchant in the alto.

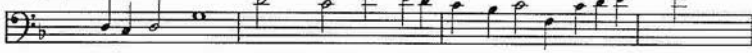
Magnificat à 6



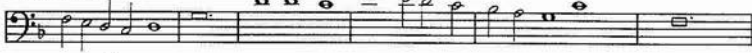
Magnificat à 7



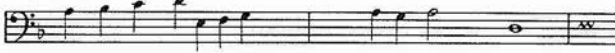
Magnificat à 6



Magnificat à 7



Magnificat à 6



Magnificat à 7



EXAMPLE 5. *Fecit potentiam*, bass lines

A similar substitution is manifest in the two *Deposuits*. The *Magnificat à 6* again employs paired sopranos against the *cantus firmus*, which this time appears in the tenor. The sopranos engage in virtuoso ornamentation, alternating with one another "in echo" (see example 6a). The *Magnificat à 7* substitutes first two *cornetti* and later two violins for the sopranos and similarly treats them in echo fashion (see example 6b). Close parallels in the upper parts may be seen in comparing examples 6a and 6b, though such parallels are not pursued systematically. But like the *Fecit potentiam* settings, there are similarities between the two basses.

The two versions of the *Esurientes* provide another instance where an organ *ritornello* in the small *Magnificat* has been replaced by an instrumental *ritornello* in the larger one. The vocal parts of both settings consist simply of the plainchant in parallel thirds, sung by alto and tenor in the *Magnificat à 6* and sopranos in the *Magnificat à 7*. The *Magnificat à 6* maintains triple meter throughout, while the *Magnificat à 7* alternates between triple and duple meter for the *ritornelli* and the chant. The *ritornelli* themselves are quite different from one setting to the other, but in both versions the verse appears without continuo accompaniment until near the end.

The musical score for Example 6a, *Magnificat à 6, Deposuit*, is written for five voices: Cantus, Sextus, Tenor, Bassus, and Generalis. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The Cantus and Sextus parts feature elaborate, virtuosic ornamentation, particularly in the first two measures. The Tenor part has a plainchant melody. The Bassus and Generalis parts provide a harmonic foundation. The lyrics are: 'poten - - - tes', 'de se - - -', and 'po -'.

EXAMPLE 6a. *Magnificat à 6, Deposuit*

Cornetto

Cornetto

Quintus

Bassus Generalis

su - it po -

ten - tes de

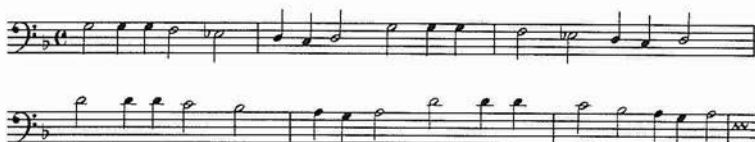
EXAMPLE 6b. *Magnificat à 7, Deposuit*

Although the two *Magnificats* have displayed rather close parallels through their first eight sections, the next verse, *Suscepit Israel*, is subjected to two completely different treatments. The small *Magnificat* follows the pattern of the preceding *Esurientes*. The *cantus firmus* is in parallel thirds again, this time for two sopranos, and the organ performs a *ritornello* that joins the voices for the last two words of the text. As in the *Esurientes*, the organ does not otherwise sound while the voices are singing.

The *Suscepit Israel* of the large *Magnificat* also employs two sopranos, but in a virtuoso duet over a tenor *cantus firmus*. There is no *ritornello* structure and the basso continuo of this version bears no relationship to the bass of the other.

With the succeeding *Sicut locutus est* Monteverdi returns to the parody process, once more substituting instruments in the large *Magnificat* for voices of the smaller one. The *Magnificat à 6* is set for five parts, with four of the voices arranged in a dialogue between a soprano-bass pair and a soprano-tenor pair, the latter repeating precisely the phrases of the former. The middle register is occupied by the alto intoning the *cantus firmus*.

The version with instruments in the *Magnificat à 7* juxtaposes a pair of violins with a pair of *cornetti* (the organ bass is also doubled alternately by a viola and a trombone), but the *cantus firmus* is still in the alto and there is a strong resemblance between the bass lines of the two segments (see examples 7a and 7b). An especially rapid exchange in the dialogue of the small *Magnificat* even finds a parallel in the instrumental dialogue of the other setting (see examples 8a and 8b). Once again a similarity between the two basses may be noted.



Altus
- bra - ham et se - - - mi - ni

Violino

Violino

Cornetto

Cornetto

Trombone

Viola da braccio

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 8b. *Magnificat à 7, Sicut locutus est*

In the first verse of the Doxology, the *Gloria Patri*, one encounters for only the second time a substantial difference in concept between the two *Magnificats*. Though both settings are highly melismatic, the smaller *Magnificat* employs the full six-voice chorus. This polyphonic texture is periodically interrupted by repetition of phrases of the text in unadorned plainchant in only one voice, the alternation continuing to the end.

The *Gloria Patri* of the *Magnificat à 7* is yet another trio texture, with the *Magnificat*-tone *cantus firmus* in the soprano accompanied by a virtuoso duet for two tenors, the second frequently responding in echo to the first.

In the final verse, the *Sicut erat*, the two *Magnificats* once again resemble each other closely. Both employ a full polyphonic texture with the *cantus firmus* in the top part. There are several passages where the bass lines are similar, but the setting *à 7* is somewhat extended, both in the verse itself and the concluding *Amen*. The larger *Magnificat* also calls for full instrumental doubling of the voices, forming a full-sounding, grandiose conclusion to the entire composition as well as to the complete Vesper service.¹⁵

The variety and ingenuity displayed in Monteverdi's adaptations of the verse settings from one canticle to the other are impressive. Although he has maintained basic similarities in ten of the twelve sections, each of these

verses has been modified in a substantial manner. His procedure is unquestionably parodistic, but since each of the *Magnificat* segments is based on the same plainchant *cantus firmus*, there is often little difference between the parody process from one *Magnificat* to the other and the process of variation as it unfolds in the successive sections of a single *Magnificat*. The transformation of a virtuoso soprano duet with *cantus firmus* in one *Magnificat* into a duet for instruments with *cantus firmus* in the other is essentially the same procedure as accompanying the *cantus firmus* with a virtuoso tenor duet in one verse of a canticle and a virtuoso bass duet in another verse of the same composition. Because of the constant presence of the *cantus firmus*, correspondences in the basses of different verses of each *Magnificat* can also be observed. They do not approach the frequency of resemblances between parallel settings in the two *Magnificats*, however, since Monteverdi's parody technique creates closer relationships than his variations. The difference between parody and variation in the *Magnificats* is thus a question of similarity between two compositions versus variety within a single piece. This distinction is a matter of degree, not a dissimilarity in basic process or concept, and it is doubtful if the semantic separation made today from a historical perspective existed in Monteverdi's mind. In both cases he was working with a musical constant, which he continually altered or adapted in some manner to a new context. Thus, by describing the details of Monteverdi's parody process, most aspects of his variation technique within each *Magnificat* have also been discerned, and only a brief commentary on the *cantus firmus* itself and its effect on harmony and tonality remains to be added.

The *Magnificat* chant chosen by Monteverdi is Tone 1, beginning on F and concluding on D.¹⁶ However, Monteverdi also frequently transposes the tone up a fourth so that the concluding note of the chant is G, as in the opening and closing segments of both compositions. These two levels often alternate, but not consistently. In both *Magnificats* the transposed version is more common, and the primary notated tonality of both canticles is G minor. But with the recitation tone falling at times on D, at times on A, there is also opportunity for modulation to B-flat, D minor, and F major. Because the plainchant is always sung in relatively long note values, there is room for substantial harmonic variety within any given tonality. Indeed, Monteverdi achieves remarkable diversity in the bass lines harmonizing parallel passages of the chant in the successive sections of each *Magnificat*. But despite such variety, certain similarities between the basses of different sections do exist. The virtuoso duets, for example, all tend to have slow-moving, strongly cadential basses. Basses consisting of ascending and descending scales are also common, and as noted above, more detailed similarities between the basses of parallel passages in different verses occasionally arise as well.

At this point it is appropriate to inquire why only ten of the twelve sections of the two *Magnificats* are parallel and why Monteverdi has chosen to reverse the settings of two successive segments from one *Magnificat* to the other. The answer appears to depend on structural considerations and reinforces the hypothesis that the *Magnificat à 6* served as the model for the *Magnificat à 7*. In the *Magnificat à 6* the sections proceed with a judicious eye for variety of texture and style, but no overall structural pattern emerges from the sum of the twelve verses. With the reversal of the settings for the *Quia fecit-Et misericordia* pair and newly composed settings for the *Suscepit Israel* and *Gloria Patri*, the segments of the *Magnificat à 7* fall into a symmetrical ordering based both on style and the use of *obbligato* instruments (see diagram I).¹⁷ Therefore it seems that Monteverdi, in modelling one *Magnificat* upon the other, also sought to impose a more balanced, large-scale structural organization on his second effort. If so, it is apparent that in using parody techniques in both the respond and the *Magnificats*, it was Monteverdi's tendency to elaborate and expand upon his models rather than to reduce them. This inclination to enlargement can be seen on the smaller scale of individual passages and sections as well as on the larger level of entire pieces.

Besides the *Magnificats*, the only other composition in the Vespers employing a repeated *cantus firmus* in long note values is the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*. This work borrows the opening phrase from the Litany of the Saints and reiterates it in the soprano voice eleven times over a sonata for eight instruments.¹⁸ The *cantus firmus* does not begin until well into the piece, and its successive statements are altered rhythmically and separated

DIAGRAM I

—	<i>Magnificat</i>	Chorus followed by solo soprano
—	<i>Et exultavit</i>	Virtuoso duet for tenors
—	<i>Quia respexit</i>	<i>Ritornello</i> structure and paired <i>obbligato</i> instruments
—	<i>Quia fecit</i>	Virtuoso duet for basses with two <i>obbligato</i> violins
—	<i>Et misericordia</i>	Two vocal trios in dialogue
—	<i>Fecit potentiam</i>	Duet for violins
—	<i>Deposuit</i>	Echo duets for <i>cornetti</i> and violins
—	<i>Esurientes</i>	<i>Ritornello</i> structure with <i>Magnificat</i> tone in parallel thirds in two voices
—	<i>Suscepit Israel</i>	Virtuoso duet for sopranos
—	<i>Sicut locutus</i>	Dialogue between paired <i>obbligato</i> instruments
—	<i>Gloria Patri</i>	Virtuoso duet for tenors
—	<i>Sicut erat</i>	Chorus

by rests of varying durations. Against the *cantus firmus* the instrumental sonata unfolds in several large sections with the first one restated at the end in the manner of a *da capo*. As in the *Magnificats*, the separate sections of the *Sonata* are in different styles and textures, and the meter frequently shifts between duple and triple. Unlike the *Magnificats*, the sections do not correspond with each restatement of the *cantus firmus*, for a single section may support several intonations of the chant melody.

Nevertheless, the concept of variation is indeed at work in the *Sonata*, concentrating specifically on rhythmic and melodic variation. The first two sections, for example, consist of the same material, first in duple meter, then recast in triple meter and reorchestrated, a procedure frequently encountered in dance pairs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see examples 9a and 9b).

Cantus

Violino da braccio

Violino da braccio

Cornetto

Cornetto

Trombone

Trombone

Viola da braccio

Trombone doppio

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 9a. *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*

EXAMPLE 9b. *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*

A later figure, played by the violins in duet, is presented in several melodic and rhythmic variants, even in its first appearance: a scale in dotted eighths and sixteenths is embellished with an extra sixteenth and then continues in a sequence of ornamented broken thirds (see example 10).

The scalar pattern, in both melody and bass, is a fundamental motive in the *Sonata* and appears in a variety of guises (see examples 11a, 11b, and 11c). While variation procedures may be at the root of some of these similarities, others may be attributed to a basic motivic consistency throughout the composition. The figure shown in example 11c not only involves scalar motion, but also is closely related by inversion to the opening motive of the *Sonata* quoted in example 9a. In fact, the section based on this motive functions as a transition between the scalar forms of examples 11a and 11b and a new triple-meter section whose main motive bears a

Violino da braccio

Violino da braccio

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 10. *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*

a.

b.

c.

EXAMPLE 11a, b, c. *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*, scalar basses

The musical score for Example 12, *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*, is written for five instruments: two Cornettos, a Trombone, a Viola da braccio, and a Bassus Generalis. The score is in 3/4 time. The Cornettos play a melodic line consisting of eighth and sixteenth notes. The Trombone, Viola da braccio, and Bassus Generalis provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes. The Bassus Generalis part is particularly active, playing a continuous eighth-note pattern.

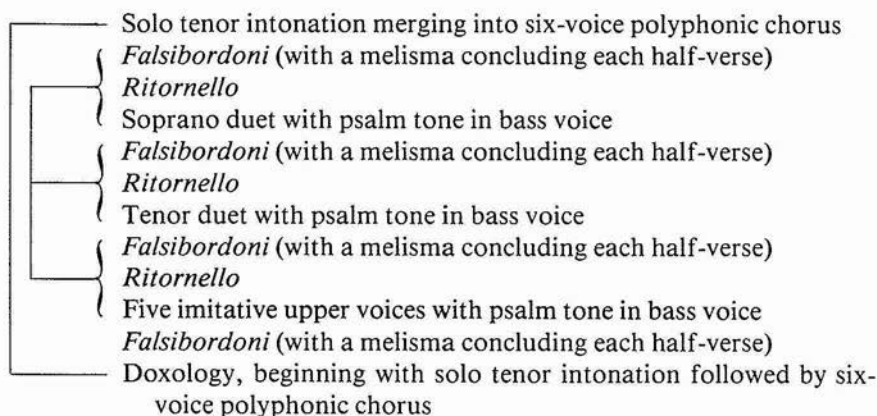
EXAMPLE 12. *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*

strong resemblance to the opening figure (see example 12). An affinity with the sixth and seventh bars of example 10 may also be discerned.

The motive in example 12 undergoes several metamorphoses in the course of this section, but all its forms are sufficiently related to one another and to the opening motive in their use of conjunct and disjunct thirds to render perfectly natural and convincing the *da capo* return of the opening passage following the conclusion of this extended section.

These techniques in the *Sonata* illustrate the close relationship between Monteverdi's concepts of melodic and rhythmic variation and sixteenth-century methods of motivic development. Although the motives quoted in examples 9-12 are typical of the early seventeenth century in the strength and regularity of their rhythms and the time intervals of their imitations, the metamorphosis of one motive out of another by means of expansion, contraction, inversion, retrogression, and alteration of rhythmic values is the same process found in innumerable *ricercari* and *canzone* of the second half of the *Cinquecento*. It is only in those passages where greater identity of material is maintained, such as example 9, that one can speak of variation in the modern formal sense rather than thematic development. Yet the distinction between the two in the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* is largely a matter of degree, although it has significant structural implications. The techniques of thematic development facilitate the construction of large continuous sections, which maintain a certain sense of homogeneity despite alterations in the melodic material. The process of variation, on the other hand, through its retention of a basic and readily perceptible morphological identity, tends to subdivide the music into comparatively short, discrete sections where first one variation technique is exposed and then another. This is apparent in the first part of the *Sonata*, which relies more on the process of variation

DIAGRAM II



organization, most segments of which correspond with a verse of the text (see diagram II).

In the opening polyphonic section the psalm tone, moving primarily in minims and semiminims, is combined with a second subject in an imitative texture. The symmetrically placed Doxology begins with a slow intonation of the chant by the tenor alone, transposed down a step to *g*, but in the concluding *Sicut erat* the long-note *cantus firmus* moves to *d* in the bass, creating a mostly static harmonic foundation. Above this bass the upper parts revolve around the pitches of the D minor triad in five-voice polyphony. As a result, the *Sicut erat* has the character of rhythmically enlivened *falsobordone*, not unlike *Domine ad adiuvandum*. With the transposition of the recitation tone to *d*, the primary harmony is based on the same tonic as the respond.

Between these two framing sections the series of *falsibordoni*, *ritornelli*, and thinner imitative textures unfolds. The *falsibordoni* consist of unrhythmicized chordal settings of the recitation tone, harmonized alternately in each of the verses as the third of A minor and G major triads. The soprano duet, tenor duet, and five-voice imitative passage all comprise different variations over a *cantus firmus* bass with the recitation tone notated mostly in minims and semiminims. In the two duets each half-verse begins with a single voice accompanied by a largely stationary continuo. The imitative second part is introduced by repetition of the text, while the bass voice simultaneously transforms the static continuo into a rhythmicized recitation tone. Thus repetition of each half-verse prompts a variation in its setting. A subtle coloristic variation is also achieved by shifting the leading role from one voice to the other for the second half of each verse.

In each of the tripartite sections outlined above, only the optional *ritornello* and the melisma concluding each passage of *falsobordone* are free of the psalm tone. Even these melismas are based on the concept of variation, with each melisma a different rhythmic form of the same basic descending sequence (three of eight variants are shown in examples 14a, 14b, and 14c).²⁰ Each *ritornello* is similarly a slightly modified repetition (transposed up a step) of the immediately preceding melisma, exchanging the vocal sonority for an instrumental one.

The beginning of the Doxology, where the tenor carries the chant in long notes supported solely by the continuo, offers yet another approach to the *cantus firmus*. The subsequent *Sicut erat*, with the *cantus firmus* in the bass as described above, is thus a variant on the *Gloria Patri* in harmonizing the chant with full chorus rather than continuo alone. In performance, if the optional *ritornelli* are played, the instruments could also be used to double the voices in this concluding choral passage, creating further variety in sonority.

The second psalm, *Laudate pueri*, is for eight-voice choir, but Monteverdi rarely divides the ensemble into antiphonal four-voice groupings, showing a much stronger inclination to pair voices in the same register.²¹ Throughout this piece the composer is extremely flexible in his treatment of the plainchant. The psalm tone migrates freely from voice to voice, is

The musical score for Example 14a, 'Dixit Dominus, melisma', is written for eight voices and a continuo. The parts are arranged vertically from top to bottom: Cantus, Sextus, Altus, Tenor, Quintus, Bassus, Bassus Generalis, and Continuo. The Cantus part begins with a melisma, indicated by a series of notes and rests. The other voices provide harmonic support, with some parts having lyrics like 'rum', 'tu', and 'rum'. The score is written in a single system with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The Continuo part is written in a lower register, likely for a lute or similar instrument.

EXAMPLE 14a. *Dixit Dominus*, melisma

The image displays a musical score for a seven-part choir and basso continuo, performing a melisma from the motet "Dixit Dominus". The score is organized into two systems. The first system includes staves for Cantus, Sextus, Altus, Tenor, Quintus, Bassus, and Bassus Generalis. The second system continues the vocal parts and includes a basso continuo line. The lyrics "tu - -" are written under the vocal staves, and "OS" is written under the basso continuo staff. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/2 time signature. The vocal parts feature a melisma on the word "tu", with the Cantus part holding a long note while the other parts move. The basso continuo part provides a harmonic foundation with a steady eighth-note pattern.

Cantus
Sextus
Altus
Tenor
Quintus
Bassus
Bassus Generalis

tu - -
tu - -
tu - -
tu - -
tu - -
tu - -
tu - -

OS
OS
OS
OS
OS
OS
OS

EXAMPLE 14b. *Dixit Dominus*, melisma

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system includes the following parts and lyrics:

- Cantus:** Lyrics: tu - - - - -
- Sextus:** Lyrics: tu - - - - -
- Altus:** Lyrics: tu - - - - -
- Tenor:** Lyrics: tu - - - - -
- Quintus:** Lyrics: tu - - - - -
- Bassus:** Lyrics: tu - - - - -
- Bassus Generalis:** Lyrics: tu - - - - -

The second system continues the vocal parts with the following lyrics:

- Cantus:** Lyrics: is
- Sextus:** Lyrics: is
- Altus:** Lyrics: is
- Tenor:** Lyrics: is
- Quintus:** Lyrics: is
- Bassus:** Lyrics: is
- Bassus Generalis:** Lyrics: is

The score features a melisma on the word 'is' in the second system. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and note values.

EXAMPLE 14c. *Dixit Dominus*, melisma

transposed several times and is absent altogether in some passages. Nevertheless, each verse of the psalm appears at least once in plainchant.

The opening of *Laudate pueri* develops similarly to the beginning of *Dixit Dominus*, for after a brief initial solo intonation, the psalm tone combines with a second motive to evolve a steadily expanding imitative texture. After the first verse, where *Dixit Dominus* turns to the tripartite series of *falsibordoni*, *ritornelli*, and duets, *Laudate pueri* proceeds with a lengthy succession of virtuoso duets for equal voices accompanied by the *cantus firmus*. In this section of the piece the chant migrates with each verse to the *Quintus*, *Altus*, *Cantus*, and *Sextus*, before dropping out entirely near the beginning of the final duet. The psalm tone appears both in long notes and in quicker minims and semiminims, but even in its faster rhythmic values the *cantus firmus* appears sustained because of the rapid embellishments in the other voices. The movement of the chant out of the low register to the upper parts, where it no longer forms the bass, permits increased harmonic variety, and two successive transpositions of the psalm tone upward by a fifth in verses 2-4 admit a wider tonal compass as well. These migrations and transpositions bring the *cantus firmus* to the top of the vocal texture at the climactic verse, "The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens." As the psalm text gradually turns back toward humanity, the chant returns to its original tonal level and step by step migrates back through the voices to the *Tenor* and *Quintus*.²²

The duet variations on the *cantus firmus* encompass verses 2-6, but from verse 7, *Suscitans a terra*, to the Doxology, the chant is embedded in a fuller choral texture, appearing in a different voice in each verse (*Altus*, *Quintus*, and finally *Tenor*). Temporary absences of the psalm tone in each of these verses allow even further harmonic flexibility. In verse 8 Monteverdi twice arrives at a semi-cadence on an E major triad, which would have been impossible were the chant sounding at those moments. Since the *cantus firmus* never returns to the lowest voice, it never completely governs the harmony. Although the recitation tone is consistently on *c'* from verse 7 to the end, the harmonization may be in either C major or A minor. Cadences in G major also occur in this section, which is generally characterized by substantial tonal variety. The texture likewise varies considerably, with the style ranging from chordal to imitative and the number of voices changing constantly.

The Doxology constitutes still another variation in the treatment of the plainchant. In the *Gloria Patri*, after an initial polyphonic statement without *cantus firmus*, the recitation tone is presented in the *Quintus* (second tenor) with continuo support only, reminiscent of the corresponding passage in *Dixit Dominus*. The chant is in sustained notes rather than the shorter values used earlier and alternates with a brief chordal passage in triple meter, which is treated antiphonally. The *Sicut erat*, as in many psalms of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, derives from its text,

“as it was in the beginning,” the rationale for a varied repetition of the opening music of the psalm, employing the same motives in new combinations and a compressed format (these motives, in varied form, also serve to introduce the *Gloria Patri*). The extended polyphonic *Amen* forms an entirely separate coda and abjures the plainchant altogether.

The variation procedures and formal structure in *Laetatus sum* do not depend on the psalm tone at all, but rather on the disposition of the text. In this piece the plainchant appears only occasionally in a tenor, alto, or soprano voice, although it does stand out prominently when it is used. Instead of the *cantus firmus*, the framework for variation is a series of independent bass patterns, which are repeated in the sequence ABACD, ABACD, ABD. Each pattern corresponds to one verse of the text except C and D, which combine for a single verse. The *Sicut erat*, concluding the Doxology, coincides with the final statement of pattern D.

The first of these structural modules is the famous walking bass frequently cited in the Monteverdi literature (see example 15a).²³ This bass is repeated verbatim in each of its five recurrences, lending the psalm a strong sense of harmonic and structural continuity. The varied reiteration of the other three patterns has generally escaped notice (see examples 15b, 15c, and 15d).²⁴ The systematic return of these basses tightens the organization of the composition even further.

The walking bass is both highly repetitive and sequential in its motivic structure. The second bass pattern (example 15b) is similarly repetitive. The



EXAMPLE 15a, b, c, d. *Laetatus sum*, bass patterns

third unit (example 15c), however, is almost completely static and serves as the support for virtuoso passagework both times it appears. The last pattern (example 15d) is also repetitious in that the final four bars are a sequential replication of the preceding four. The virtuoso passagework over pattern C introduces verses 4 and 8, which then continue with a more normal polyphonic texture over pattern D.

Although these patterns are on the surface very different from one another, there are some important points of similarity among three of the four. A comparison between the beginning of the walking bass and pattern B demonstrates that the latter is a slower moving variant of the former, particularly in its harmonic outline (see example 16). The fourth bass also uses scalar motives similar to the first and second. Only pattern C, without any rhythmic or pitch motion at all, is radically different.



Tenor

Bassus Generalis

Lae-ta - tus sum in his quaedi-cta sunt

mi - hi in do-mum do - mi - ni i - bi - mus

EXAMPLE 17a. *Laetatus sum*, walking bass

Tenor

Quintus

Bassus Generalis

- lem Ieru - salem Ie - ru - salem quae ae-difi - ca - tur

ut ci - vitas cu - ius parti-ci-pa - ti-o e - ius in idi - psum

EXAMPLE 17b. *Laetatus sum*, walking bass

Nisi Dominus is constructed in a wholly different manner from the preceding three psalms. Two five-voice choirs combine in dense polyphony at the beginning and end, but alternate as strict *cori spezzati* in the central portion of the composition. The tenor of each choir intones the *cantus firmus* ceaselessly throughout the entire piece. At times the chant is in longer notes than the other parts, but it also frequently moves at the same speed. In order to allow for harmonic variety, Monteverdi includes both the *initium* and the *terminatio* in each restatement of the *cantus firmus* rather than merely repeating the recitation tone after the opening. Example 18 illustrates the variety of harmony Monteverdi's bass is able to achieve because of this. Even so, midway through the psalm, at *Sicut sagittae*, the tone is transposed up a fourth, allowing harmonization in B-flat and G

Cantus
te Pro - pter domum pro - pter domum do - -

Sextus
te Pro - pter domum do - -

Altus
te Propter domum domi -

Tenor
te Propter domum do - - mini propter domum domini

Quintus
te Propter domum do - - mini

Bassus
te Propter domum do - - mi - ni

Bassus Generalis
te Propter domum do - - mi - ni

EXAMPLE 17c. *Laetatus sum*, walking bass

Tenor and Quintus
Ni - - si do - minus aedi-fi - caverit do - mum

Bassus Generalis
in vanum la - bo-ra-verunt qui aedi - fi - cant e - - am

Bassus Generalis
in vanum la - bo-ra-verunt qui aedi - fi - cant e - - am

EXAMPLE 18. *Nisi Dominus*

minor in contrast to the predominating F major and D minor of the preceding sections. At the beginning of the Doxology the tone is transposed back down a fifth, permitting harmonization in E-flat major and C minor before returning to its original level for the *Sicut erat*.

Aside from this tonal variety, the main force for variation in *Nisi Dominus* is rhythm. There is continual change in the rhythmic organization from one passage to the next, with many sections possessing a lively dance-like character. Triple meter relieves the prevailing duple time during the verses where the psalm tone is transposed to B-flat, and even in duple meter

The musical score is divided into two main sections, each with a bracketed group of voices.

Primus Chorus:

- Cantus:** e - am
- Altus:** e - am
- Tenor:** e - am
- Quintus:** e - am
- Bassus:** e - am

Secundus Chorus:

- Cantus:** Ni - si nisi dominus custo-di-e-rit ci-vi-tatem ci-vi-ta - tem
- Altus:** Ni - si nisi dominus custo-di-e-rit ci-vi-tatem ci-vi-ta - tem
- Tenor:** Ni - si nisi dominus custo-di-e-rit ci-vi-tatem ci-vi-ta - tem
- Quintus:** - si do - minus custo-di-e-rit ci - vi - ta - - tem
- Bassus:** Ni - si nisi dominus custo-di-e-rit ci-vi-tatem ci-vi-ta - tem
- Bassus Generalis:** (same melody as Bassus)

EXAMPLE 19. *Nisi Dominus* (cont. on next page)

there are passages in which melodic phrases are clearly organized in groups of three minims (see example 19).

The structural organization of *Nisi Dominus* does not coincide precisely with the verses of the text as they are subdivided in the Vulgate. Monteverdi, rather, follows the sentence structure of the psalm in disposing both the *cantus firmus* and the two choirs, the second of which acts as a direct echo to the first in the central body of the piece.²⁵ The alternation of the choirs involves comparatively lengthy passages, but after the psalm tone is trans-

The musical score consists of ten staves. The first five staves are vocal parts, and the last five are instrumental parts. The lyrics are in Latin and are written below the staves.

Va - - num
 Va - - - num
 Va - - num est
 Va - - num
 Va - - num

fru - stra frustra vigilat frustra vi-gi-lat qui custodit e - - am
 fru - stra frustra vigilat frustra vi-gilat qui custodit e - - am
 fru - stra frustra vigilat frustra vi-gilat qui custodit e - - am
 fru - stra vi - - gilat qui custo - dit e - - am
 fru - stra frustra vigilat frustra vi-gilat qui custodit e - - am

EXAMPLE 19 continued.

posed at *Sicut sagittae*, the exchanges proceed at a more rapid rate, leading to the recombination of the two ensembles in the next verse. The Doxology commences with the shift to E-flat major noted above, but the *Sicut erat* recapitulates almost precisely the opening of the psalm with only a brief *Amen* added at the conclusion.²⁶

The straightforward use of the plainchant and the uncomplicated structural and tonal scheme of *Nisi Dominus* are succeeded by a more complex treatment in the last psalm, *Lauda Jerusalem*. This piece is also charac-

terized by frequent antiphonal responses and an almost continuous *cantus firmus* in the tenor, but the texture is thinner, comprising only seven voices. The six parts aside from the tenor subdivide into two equal ensembles of soprano, alto, and bass, and the resulting transparent sonorities facilitate more frequent interchanges and greater rhythmic complexity than in *Nisi Dominus*.

Lauda Jerusalem progresses uninterruptedly without repetitions or symmetry, although each successive verse is marked by a cadence and shift in the texture. After an opening that alternates a full chordal sound with the unadorned psalm tone, the chant continues pervasively with only occasional short breaks at the *mediatio* or between the verses. The recitation tone, which is *c'* for the first three verses, is harmonized with both C major and A minor (cadences frequently occur on A major triads).²⁷ In verses 4-6 the chant is transposed up a fourth, permitting harmonization in F major and D minor, but in verses 7-9 the *cantus firmus* returns to its original level. The Doxology reveals a similar process, as explained below. Within the prescribed tonal areas the harmony fluctuates continually, never establishing any distinctive patterns.

While the tonal movement in this psalm is a function of the level at which the recitation tone appears, structure on a smaller scale is determined by antiphony as in *Nisi Dominus*. In *Lauda Jerusalem*, however, the exchanges between the ensembles occur much more rapidly. Instead of responding with antiphonal echoes, each ensemble contributes to the textual and musical continuity. The antiphonal exchanges initially proceed at regular time intervals, but with the fifth verse the time span is reduced by half. Finally the two groups join in verse 7, at the point where the chant returns to its original level, remaining combined until the Doxology. Although this full-voiced passage is mostly chordal, it is simultaneously imitative at very short time intervals, producing a lively mosaic of entrances as pitches and motives first heard in one trio reappear almost immediately in the other.

Only the Doxology is treated as a separate section. For the first time the chant migrates out of the tenor into the top voice, achieving greater prominence. During the *Gloria Patri*, where the *cantus firmus* is once again transposed up a fourth, all voices are slower moving, but for the *Sicut erat* the recitation tone returns to C and the prevailing rhythms are restored (the reciting tone is also briefly transposed to E in this section). Unlike *Nisi Dominus*, the *Sicut erat* of *Lauda Jerusalem* differs from the opening of the psalm. Here the passage resembles measured *falsobordone* with occasional ornamental elaboration and staggering of the various parts. A large polyphonic *Amen*, in which the *cantus firmus* is for the first time absent, concludes what must be described as a through-composed setting of the psalm text.

These five psalms demonstrate Monteverdi's inexhaustible imagination and ingenuity. The melodically monotonous psalm tone, rather than proving restrictive, stimulated Monteverdi to a multitude of divergent solutions, most of them rooted in the process of variation. In these settings variations in vocal style, variations in texture, variations in choral and solo sonorities, variations over ground basses, tonal variation, harmonic variation, melodic variation, rhythmic variation, and variation in antiphonal effects all come into play. Yet the psalm tones and the limitations they impose serve as a binding thread for all five compositions, generating aesthetic consistency and cohesion despite the diversity of treatments. These psalms highlight two opposite but complementary facets of Monteverdi's genius. Not only does his imagination appear boundless, but he is also a disciplined master of formal design. Without the carefully planned structures based on the psalm tones, symmetry, and variation schemes, the enormous diversity of styles and techniques would have produced only a series of loose fragments lacking plausible relationships to one another. By the same token, without the variety of remarkably imaginative treatments of the psalm tone, the most tightly planned structural organization would not have saved these pieces from monotony. This combination of freedom of imagination and organizational discipline is an artistic achievement of the highest order, palpably distinguishing Monteverdi from his contemporaries.

The remaining four pieces of the Vespers, the motets *Nigra sum*, *Pulchra es*, *Duo Seraphim*, and *Audi cœlum*, are all in the modern solo or few-voice style and are without any dependence on a *cantus prius factus*. Nevertheless, an examination of these works demonstrates once again that variation techniques are basic to Monteverdi's compositional process.

Of the variation procedures employed in the motets, melodic variation is of particular interest. *Pulchra es*, set for two sopranos, begins with only one voice, the other not appearing until the eighth bar (see example 20). When the *Sextus* enters, it opens with the same melody Monteverdi had already notated on the upper staff of the *partitura* at the beginning.²⁸ But while this

Cantus

Pulchra es a - mi - ca me - - - a su - a - vis et deco - - -

Sextus

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 20. *Pulchra es*

The musical score consists of four systems of staves. The first system has two vocal parts with lyrics: "ra fi-li-a Ieru-salem pul - chra es a - mi - ca". The second system continues the vocal parts with lyrics: "me - a su - a - vis et de - co - ra si -". The third system continues the vocal parts with lyrics: "a sua - vis et de - co - ra si -". The fourth system shows a continuation of the vocal parts with lyrics: "cut Ieru - sa - lom" and "cut ie - ru - sa - lom". Asterisks are placed above certain notes in the vocal parts to indicate melodic variations. The number 10 is written above the first system, and 15 is written above the second system.

EXAMPLE 20 continued.

melody had originally served as a countersubject to the *Cantus* in bars 1-2, it is simultaneously a melodic variation upon it, as indicated by the asterisks in the *Sextus* part in the example. The continuation of the *Sextus* in bars 11-14 prolongs the melodic variation, which is further enhanced by the anticipatory fragment in the *Cantus* in bar 8 and the subsequent imitative entrance in the latter part of bar 10. The *Cantus* persists with a further melodic variation in bars 14-18, corresponding to bars 5-7, again marked by asterisks.

The bass line of bars 8-18 is virtually identical to that of bars 1-7, the repetition in bar 11 being necessitated by the presence of the two voices in imitation. Structurally, therefore, this portion of the composition can appropriately be designated AA', the addition of the *Sextus* coinciding with the beginning of the harmonic repetition and melodic variation.

The *Sextus* is used later in *Pulchra es* to forge a variation in sonority coincident with another structural repetition. From the verse *Averte oculos tuos* to the conclusion of the text, the composition reverts to the solo *Cantus*. But then the entire section is repeated almost verbatim with the addition of the *Sextus* in parallel thirds and occasional counterpoint with the *Cantus*, at times above, at times below it.

Melodic variation in the motets does not always coincide with bass repetition. The melodic organization of *Audi coelum* exhibits cohesion through

EXAMPLE 21a, b. *Audi coelum*

EXAMPLE 22. *Audi coelum*

the use of variation *despite* the absence of sectional repetition and parallel bass patterns. Examples 21a and 21b compare two obviously related melodic fragments, but their basses are completely different and the two examples are even in different keys. Further expansion and elaboration of the same basic melodic shape follows in a later passage (see example 22). In fact, bars 20-31, quoted in part in example 22, may be described as a free melodic variation of bars 9-19, which begin with the passage in example 21b. While the basses do not coincide in these two sections, there are nevertheless some similarities, especially with respect to parallel modulations.

Later in this motet the style turns* to recitative and there appear three successive versions of the same declamatory phrase, finally concluding with a melismatic variant of the rise from *a* to *d'* with which the section began (see example 23, overleaf). In view of the fact that all of the passages discussed here are based on this rise from *a* to *d'*, expanded at times to *g* to *d'* or even *f* to *d'*, the beginning two bars of the motet are instructive with regard to Monteverdi's technique (see example 24). Here we have the motivic kernel out of which the melodic structure of the motet evolves. Monteverdi's procedure is to develop his motives freely, expanding and ornamenting them, but always preserving a fundamental relationship to the opening of the piece. Looking at the same issue in reverse, the initial motive may be considered a reduction to the simplest form of the most important melodic shapes of the composition.



EXAMPLE 24. *Audi coelum*

The repetition of a passage with variation in sonority is an important feature of *Audi coelum*, as it was in *Pulchra es*. But in *Audi coelum* the variant repetitions are effected by a second tenor in echo to the first rather than through sectional repeats. This second tenor echoes more softly, perhaps even at a spatial distance, the closing of several major phrases, forming a verbal pun on the concluding word of the first tenor (see example 25).

Melodic structuring similar to *Audi coelum* also characterizes *Nigra sum* and need not be discussed here in detail.²⁹ Note should be taken, however, of the use of melodic patterns in tonal sequences. Example 26 illustrates a descending melodic figure, first the fifth *d'* to *g*, then the fourth *d'* to *a*, which is repeated in varied and compressed forms at successively higher levels, modulating sequentially from G major to A minor to C major.

The musical score is for a three-voice setting titled "Audi coelum". It features three parts: Tenor, Echo, and Bassus Generalis. The music is written in a single system with four systems of staves. The lyrics are in Latin and are written below the Tenor and Echo staves. The Bassus Generalis part is written in the bottom staff of each system.

System 1:

- Tenor: - cis praedi-ca - ta a Pro - phe-tis E - ze - chi-el por - ta O - ri - en -
- Echo: (empty staff)
- Bassus Generalis: (empty staff)

System 2:

- Tenor: - ta-lis il - la sa - cra et foe-lix porta per quam mors fuit expulsa introduxit au-tem
- Echo: (empty staff)
- Bassus Generalis: (empty staff)

System 3:

- Tenor: vi - ta quae semper tutum est me-dium inter ho-mines et Deum pro cul-pis re -
- Echo: (empty staff)
- Bassus Generalis: (empty staff)

System 4:

- Tenor: - medium om - - - - - nes
- Echo: (empty staff)
- Bassus Generalis: (empty staff)

EXAMPLE 23. *Audi coelum*

Nigra sum also has an important structural repetition involving variation. The last section is reiterated with slightly varied vocal rhythm and an additional lengthy descending scale in the bass just before the end. This scale is designed to dissipate the energy and tension accumulated by the constant upward thrust of the melodic motion throughout the piece (see example 27).³⁰

Techniques of construction in the three-voice *Duo Seraphim* are similar to the other motets. A few basic intervals serve as the outline for extraordinarily elaborate vocal ornamentation, and as in *Pulchra es*, the subsequent addition of a voice not present at the beginning begets variety in so-

Tenor

gau - - - - - dio

Echo

Au - - - - - dio

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 25. *Audi coelum, echo*

Voce sola

Tenor

Ni - gra sum sed for - mo - sa fi - li - a for - mo - sa fi - li - a for - mo - -

Bassus Generalis

- sa Nigra sum sed for - mo - sa for - mo - sa fi - li - a le - ru - - sa -

15

20

10

5

du - - xit in cu - bi - cu - lum su - um

EXAMPLE 26. *Nigra sum*

Tenor

tem - - pus pu - ta - ti - - o - - - nis ad - ve - - nit.

Bassus Generalis

tem - - pus pu - ta - ti - - o - - - nis ad - ve - - nit.

70

75

EXAMPLE 27. *Nigra sum*

nority. In *Duo Seraphim* the third tenor does not join the other two until the second part of the piece, prompted by the phrase *Tres sunt qui testimonium dant*. To conclude this second section, the last two lines of text from the first part are repeated to the same music. But in order to accommodate the additional tenor, the imitative texture is amplified in both length and density. This expansion produces an elongated and contrapuntally more complex variation on the corresponding passage in the first part of the motet.

For Monteverdi the concept of variation was obviously not limited to one or two fundamental procedures; rather it informs every aspect of his compositional process in the Vespers. Variations on the *cantus firmus* and repetitive basses forge the large-scale structural scaffolding of the psalms, *Magnificats*, hymn, and *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*. Variation techniques are also at the heart of smaller structural formats in the psalms and motets. Variation in rhythm and sonority is a key factor in parallel passages throughout the Vespers. Melodic variation is one of the most important elements in the composition of the motets. Each of these general types of variation is manifested in a seemingly limitless variety of ways, and Monteverdi never employs exactly the same method twice. There is always some difference in approach, some difference in the intended effect.

Yet Monteverdi's variation procedures are in many instances not far removed from his parody process. The alterations that transform the toccata of *L'Orfeo* into the respond *Domine ad adiuvandum*, and the adaptations of the various sections of one *Magnificat* to the other are often quite similar to the variation techniques witnessed in other parts of the Vespers. Even the process of melodic and rhythmic variation is an extension of the simpler forms of paraphrase observed throughout the parody *Missa In illo tempore*, companion to the Vespers in the 1610 print.³¹

These concepts and procedures were new to Monteverdi in the years 1607-1610, for the much smaller genre of the madrigal did not require such structural considerations. In fact, aside from the mass, whose unifying techniques were evolved throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there simply were no forms that demanded structural organization on such a large scale. The historical importance of *L'Orfeo* and the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* lies in part in the new architectural problems they posed. Monteverdi's awareness of these problems and his success in finding aesthetically convincing solutions not only testify to his remarkable ingenuity but also justify and reinforce his stature as a composer of extraordinary historical significance in the development of Western music.

NOTES

The musical examples in this chapter are adapted from the edition of G. Francesco Malipiero, *Tutte le opere di Claudio Monteverdi*, vol. xiv (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1932).

1. From 1604 through 1608 Monteverdi's letters are filled with complaints about difficulties in drawing his salary, overwork, ill health brought on by the Mantuan climate, and physical exhaustion. These complaints reach their climax in a bitter letter written to the court counselor Annibale Chieppo from Cremona on December 2, 1608, in which Monteverdi requests release from the ducal service. See G. Francesco Malipiero, *Claudio Monteverdi* (Milan: Fratelli Treves Editori, 1929), pp. 135-139, and Domenico De' Paoli, *Claudio Monteverdi: Lettere, Dediche e Prefazioni* (Rome: Edizioni de Santis, 1973), pp. 33-38. An English translation of this letter is found in Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune, "The Man as seen through his Letters," *The Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), pp. 26-29. In addition to his financial difficulties, work load, and poor health, Monteverdi also suffered the death of his wife on September 10, 1607, and on March 9, 1608, the sudden death of the eighteen-year-old singer Caterina Martinella, who had been a boarder and student of Monteverdi's since 1603 and who was scheduled to sing the lead role in the imminent production of *Arianna*. Professional pressures on the composer arose not only from the Gonzaga court, but also through the attacks of the Bolognese theoretician Giovanni Maria Artusi, which Monteverdi felt compelled to rebut. This debate dragged on from 1600 to 1608. See Claude V. Palisca, "The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy," *The Monteverdi Companion*, pp. 133-166. See also chapter I of this volume, p. 14, and chapter II, pp. 47-48 and 65.

2. Both the location and precise date of the first performance of *L'Orfeo* before the *Accademia dell'Invaghiti* in Mantua are unknown. The second performance took place in the ducal palace on February 24, 1607. See Guglielmo Barblan, Claudio Gallico, and Guido Panain, *Claudio Monteverdi* (Turin: Edizioni RAI Radiotelevisione italiana, 1967), p. 47.

For the circumstances surrounding the first performance of *Arianna*, see Stuart Reiner, "La vag'Angioletta (and others)," *Analecta Musicologica* 14 (1974): 26-88. See also chapter I, p. 10 and note 8.

3. See chapter I, pp. 8-9.

4. See chapter I, pp. 10-11 and note 9.

5. Monteverdi's first extant letter, dated November 28, 1601, mentions some motets and masses that he had composed. See Malipiero, *Claudio Monteverdi*, pp. 127-128, and De' Paoli, *Claudio Monteverdi: Lettere, Dediche e Prefazioni*, pp. 17-18. An English translation is in Arnold and Fortune, *The Monteverdi Companion*, pp. 22-23. These lost items could hardly have been works in large quantities or of major significance since Monteverdi did not see fit to have them published. See chapter II, note 2 for my commentary on Don Siro Cislino's publication of three anonymous masses under Monteverdi's name.

6. Monteverdi's first meeting with the librettist Rinuccini was on October 23, 1607. The project was originally scheduled for completion by Carnival in 1608. See Barblan et al., *Claudio Monteverdi*, pp. 51-52, and Reiner, "La vag'Angioletta."

7. See chapter I, pp. 9-12, for a detailed discussion of the circumstances surrounding the

composition and publication of the Mass and Vespers. A critical analysis of the Mass is found in chapter II.

8. See chapter V for an examination of the relationship between Monteverdi's Vespers and the contemporary sacred repertoire.

9. A discussion of the musical cohesion and integrity of the Vespers is found in my Ph.D. dissertation, "The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610 and their Relationship with Italian Sacred Music of the Early Seventeenth Century" (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1972), pp. 194-248. A more updated view of tonal relationships in the Mass and Vespers, taking into consideration additional evidence, is found in chapter I of this volume, pp. 37-40.

10. See chapter V.

11. *Dixit Dominus*, *Ave maris stella*, and *Magnificat à 7*.

12. The voices are actually notated in unmeasured *falsobordone*, with the rhythm and text underlay given only in the *partitura*. See chapter I, p. 29. In the respond the trumpets of the *Orfeo* toccata are omitted and *cornetti* are assigned to double the violins.

13. Only Wolfgang Osthoff has called attention to the depth of these similarities. See Osthoff, "Unità liturgica e artistica nei 'Vespri' del 1610," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 2, no. 2 (1967): 323, note 18. The most extensive study of the *Magnificats* previously published is in Adam Adrio, *Die Anfänge des geistlichen Konzerts* (Berlin: Junker und Dünhaupt Verlag, 1935), pp. 57-68. Adrio describes some striking resemblances between the two *Magnificats* but attributes them to Monteverdi's representation of the text: "*dass der gegebene Text eine bestimmte klangliche Vorstellung des Komponisten hervorgerufen habe . . .*" (p. 64). Hans Redlich describes the *Magnificat à 6* as a "simplified 'pocket edition' of the preceding large *Magnificat*." See Redlich, *Claudio Monteverdi: Life and Works*, trans. Kathleen Dale (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 129.

14. In bars 4-5 of example 3b the cadence in the bass is delayed by a half bar over example 3a in order to give the *pifare* a brief opportunity to sound alone. This displacement subsequently affects the bass in the succeeding bars. Bar 6 of example 3b compares with bars 5-6 of example 3a. Also compare bars 11-13 of example 3b with 10-12 of example 3a.

15. See chapter I, p. 36 for further discussion of instrumental doubling in the *Magnificat à 7*.

16. Both *Magnificats* are notated in the high *chiavette*. For a discussion of the relationship between *chiavette*, transposition, and pitch, see chapter I, pp. 37-40.

17. For a similar diagram, but with comparisons made on the basis of number of voices alone, see Denis Stevens, "Where are the Vespers of Yesteryear?" *The Musical Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (July 1961): 330.

18. The Litany of the Saints is found in *The Liber Usualis with Introduction and Rubrics in English* (New York: Desclee Company, 1963), Appendix II, p. 2*.

19. Stevens diagrams the structural symmetry in the use of the two choirs in "Where are the Vespers of Yesteryear?" p. 330.

20. A number of closely related sequences can be found in the *Missa In illo tempore*. See Jerome Roche, "Monteverdi and the *Prima Prattica*," *The Monteverdi Companion*, pp. 173-174 and 176-178. See also chapter II of the present volume. Denis Arnold quotes a similar sequence from the sacred music of Giaches de Wert in his *Monteverdi*, revised ed. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1975), p. 134.

21. See chapter I, p. 30, for a discussion of the performance rubric of this psalm.

22. The full text of *Laudate pueri* reads as follows in the King James version (Psalm 113; 112 in the Vulgate): 1. Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. 2. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. 3. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. 4. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. 5. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high. 6. Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! 7. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; 8. That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. 9. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.

23. See in particular Denis Arnold's discussion of this bass in his "Formal Design in Monteverdi's Church Music," *Claudio Monteverdi e il suo Tempo, Atti del Congresso internazionale di Studi monteverdiani, May 3-May 7, 1968*, ed. Raffaello Monterosso (Verona: La Stamperia Valdonega, 1969), p. 207.

24. Hugo Leichtentritt has been the only one to outline the complexity of this repetitive structure. See Leichtentritt, *Geschichte der Motette*, reprint ed. after Leipzig 1908 ed. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), p. 245. Jürgen Jürgens also mentions the repetition of three separate bass patterns in "Urtext und Aufführungspraxis bei Monteverdis *Orfeo* und *Marien-Vesper*," *Claudio Monteverdi e il suo Tempo*, p. 284.

25. The *Liber Usualis* subdivides the psalm text in the same manner as Monteverdi, resulting in a regular couplet structure and one more verse than enumerated in the Vulgate. Monteverdi's liturgical sources may have done the same because of the two-part structure of the psalm tone.

26. See chapter I, pp. 23-24, for a discussion of the conclusion of *Nisi Dominus*.

27. See the discussion of *chiavette* and transposition in *Lauda Jerusalem* in chapter I, pp. 37-40.

28. See the discussion of the *partitura* in chapter I, pp. 32-33.

29. For a detailed discussion of *Nigra sum* see chapter IV.

30. See chapter IV, p. 120.

31. For a full discussion of parody technique in the Mass, see chapter II.